Fleet Mayor.

Martis quinto die Septemb. 1693. *Annoq;* *Reg. Regis & Regin'* Willielmi & Mariæ, Angliæ, &c. *quinto.*

THis Court doth desire Mr. *Warly* to Print his Sermon, Preach'd at *Guild-Hall-Chapel*, on *Sunday* the 20*th* of *Augusſt* laſt, before the Lord Mayor and Aldermen of this City.

Goodfellow.

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A

SERMON

Preach'd before the

RIGHT HONOURABLE

THE

Lord Mayor

Of the City of *LONDON*,

AND THE

Court of ALDERMEN,

AT

Guild-Hall-Chapel,

On *SUNDAY*, *Aug.* 20. 1693.

By *JONAS WARLY* M. A. Vicar of *Witham* in *ESSEX*.

LONDON,

Printed by *T. W.* for *Walter Kettilby*, at the Bishop's Head in St. *Paul's* Church-Yard, 1693.

A

SERMON

Preach'd before the

LIGHT HONOURABLE

THE

Lord Mayor

Of the City of LONDON

AND

COURT of ALDERMEN

AT

To the Right Honourable

Sir *JOHN FLEET*,

Lord Mayor

OF THE

CITY of *LONDON*.

MY LORD,

IN due Obedience to your Lordſhip's Command, this Sermon is made publick: ſuch an Authority alone could give it the Confidence to appear abroad; for, I conceive, there is nothing therein, to recommend it ſo far, but that it may be thought ſomewhat ſeaſonable. And when no leſs than the Terrors of the Lord will perſwade Men, 'tis fit that ſuitable Examples be ſet before us, that, as in a Glaſs, we may ſee the Complexion of our Times, and not forget what manner of People we are, who are apt to feed our very Diſeaſes, and make our Dangers become more incurable; when, by the wiſeſt Courſes, we ſhould endeavour wholly to avoid them. How far your Lordſhip has been ſenſible of theſe Miſtakes, and their Conſequences, your Conduct has ſufficiently demonſtrated; be-

ing fully aware of the Miſchiefs of precipitate Motions, and intemperate Heats; which, in the iſſue, like Phaeton, *might miſ-guide, and ſet on fire the World; well foreknowing, That ſuch Evils are beſt prevented in their Riſe, and ſtifled in their Beginnings: for too eaſie a Compliance with the Tempers and Infirmities of Men, would be, as when a Phyſician humours the Deſires of ſick Perſons, when he ſhould be exerciſing his Skill, in a true Method of their Cure.*

This is a ſecond time your Lordſhip hath been advanced to an Eminent Station. The firſt was, When to Govern prov'd a Task, next to ſtilling the Noiſe of the Waves, The Madneſs of the People: *and now again, your Lordſhip ſits at the Helm, when the Sea runs high; yet, by a watchful Eye, have ſhunn'd the Rocks and Shelves on either hand.*

To diſcharge a Truſt, in ſo Critical a Juncture, requires ſuch a ſteady Reſolution. But I forget how great an Interruption I may give your Lordſhip in the weighty Affairs committed to your Management, and ſo worthy of your Care; therefore I ſhall only humbly beg leave to ſubſcribe my ſelf,

My Lord,

Your Lordſhip's

Moſt Obedient Servant,

Jonas Warly.

A

SERMON

Preach'd before the

Lord Mayor.

St. *Matth.* xxiv. the middle part of the Third Verſe.

Tell us, when ſhall theſe things be? and what ſhall be the ſign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?

OUR Saviour Chriſt and his Diſciples (as appears by the Context) being at this time met together, at the Temple of *Jeruſalem*, they, out of a Reverend Contemplation of the place, took occaſion to magnifie the ſtately Structure of that beautiful Fabrick; but their Maſter, ſeeing farther into the real Condition of it, than

than their feeble Apprehenſions could ſearch, immediately foretold them, that they valued but a ſhort-liv'd *Spectacle*; a City and Temple, that ſhould quickly become a mere heap of Rubbiſh: and that which they now beheld with ſo pleaſing Admiration, ſhould ſoon more aſtoniſh the *Spectators*, with the horrid appearance of utter Deſolation. The amuſement which this News wrought in their minds, kept them ſilent awhile, till they came from the City to the *Mount of Olives:* for then the Text ſays, as he ſat there, *his Diſciples came to him privately, ſaying, Tell us, when ſhall theſe things be?* So that the flouriſhing ſight of *Jeruſalem*, and the Temple in their Glory, did not carry with it a more ſtrong ſurprizal before, than the frightful Imagination of them in their dreadful Ruines did after. For what Queſtion of profounder difficulty, or greater concern, could be ſtarted thence, than the Times and Signs of the Deſtruction of thoſe glorious Buildings, and the *Eternal Funeral* of the whole World?

This Queſtion in the Text conſiſts of Three Parts.

I. The

I. The Time of the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem.*
II. The Signs of the Coming of Chriſt; And,
III. Of the End of the World.

Though Queſtions are uſually the buſineſs of *Theological Schools*, while they are controverted and diſcuſs'd; yet they are as properly the Subject of the Pulpit, after they are anſwered and ſtated: and therefore I ſhall here begin with Chriſt, the Perſon queſtioned, who ought to have the firſt place in our Diſcourſe, from whom, not only the Foundation of this preſent Colloquy, but all things elſe received their Original. Common Reaſon teaches every one that is in doubt, to apply themſelves for ſatisfaction, to thoſe who are infallibly able to reſolve them: And what Riddle is too hard for this *Oedipus?* What Prophecy too abſtruſe for this *Oracle?* From whom every Event muſt have a particular Commiſſion before *ever* it can come to paſs. Nor is this *Omniſcient Caſuiſt* leſs willing than able to ſatisfie our Enquiries, provided we make no propoſals to him, but ſuch as the Knowledge thereof ſhall conduce to our Benefit, and that (a Man would think) is a very eaſie Condition. Chriſt indeed would do no Miracle, when it was to gratifie mere Curioſity, or give a ſign when unfit or unreaſonable; as when the *Jews* at his Paſſion cried out, *If thou be the Chriſt, come down from the Croſs, and we will believe thee.* The very means which they propos'd for the ſatisfaction of

their doubt, would more harden them in their Unbelief: for Christ had no other way to prove himself the *Messias*, but by staying there, and redeeming Mankind by his Sufferings. So the fault is in the Petitioner alone, when Heaven affords not our Questions a satisfactory Answer. For since Christ never denies to grant any thing to them that ask, unless they *ask amiss*; it might well give the Disciples hopes to meet here with a favourable Audience, and a ready Compliance with their earnest Desires; for which end *they came to him privately as he sate on the Mount of Olives*: which argues, that as they had made choice of a convenient place to propose their Interrogatories; so they thought the discovery of such important Secrets, was to be communicated to none, but his Bosom-Friends, inseparable Attendants, and Beloved Apostles.

Wherefore when he was removed from all other Followers, and retreated from the City to this *solitary Retirement*, they jointly concur in a modest Application to him, to be certified in these material Questions propos'd; the *first* whereof is,

I. The Time of the Destruction of *Jerusalem*. The inevitable Destiny of which place Christ had voluntarily foretold them, in the end of the preceding Chapter; and the Fore-runners of it he further explains to them in the subsequent part of this. He did not think fit to acquaint them with the very

precise

preciſe time, but in general tells them, That, *v.* 34. *this generation ſhall not paſs away, till all theſe things be fulfilled*; that is, in ſuch a ſpace of Years, as many of them then preſent ſhould live to ſee it. Which diſmal Event came fully to paſs, in leſs than half a Century after; ſo,

II. The next thing that falls under Enquiry is, What were thoſe Signs? which I ſhall refer to the latter part, and ſo haſten to,

III. The next Particular, What they were Forerunners of, which is twofold.

1. *Of Chriſt's Coming.* And,

2. *Of the End of the World.*

1. By the *firſt* of which we may underſtand the End and Period of the *Jewiſh State.* And,

2. By the *End of the World*, We may look forward to the *final Doom*, when Chriſt ſhall come to judge it. And ſince it may refer to both, it may afford ſome uſeful Inſtruction diſtinctly to conſider them.

If then we take it in the *firſt* ſenſe, What they ſhould meet with before theſe terrible things ſhould come to paſs; Chriſt's Anſwer is, They ſhould *hear of wars, and rumours of wars, but the end was not yet*; i.e. greater ſhould follow. Thoſe were but the Alarms of what they ſhould afterwards feel, for *Nation ſhould riſe againſt Nation*, and what was likely to be the moſt melancholy part of it, it was foretold (tho' they were not ſo wiſe to diſcern or conſider it) That they

ſhould become the Authours of their own Calamities, and lay the firſt Scene of this ſad Tragedy themſelves. For by *Nation*, in the Judgment of Interpreters, may be underſtood, Principality againſt Principality; Region againſt Region; Tribe againſt Tribe; if not ſo unhappy as to be divided againſt it ſelf: and theſe *Civil Commotions* our Saviour terms *the beginning of their ſorrows*, and were but Preparatories and Fore-runners of greater ſtill behind, *v.* 15. For *when ye ſhall ſee the abomination of deſolation*, i.e. when cloſely encompaſs'd by the Enemy, *v.* 21. *then ſhall be great tribulation, ſuch as was not ſince the beginning of the world.* Such as words could not ſufficiently expreſs, nor tears lament, *v.* 15, *Then whoſo readeth, let him underſtand.*

For, by this time, the *Romans* had *caſt a trench about them, and kept them in on every ſide*; *Luk.* 19.43. yet did not their Contentions abate. Indeed, when a long and ſtreight Siege had brought the Sword, Famine, and Peſtilence all at once, and Judgments came in ſo thick one upon the heels of another, for a while their Heats ſeem'd a little to ſlacken, and as it were, became Confederates, to make head againſt the *Romans*, as a Common Enemy. This put a little ſtop to their inteſtine Broyls; yet alas, their Animoſities were not cured, but reſpited; the fire was not put out, but ſmother'd: It burnt inward, and on the firſt occaſion, when ſtirr'd, broke out again.

For

For if the Enemy did once draw off, or make a truce, they were ſoon in a freſh Conſpiracy, and there was a ſtrife through all the Tribes of *Iſrael*. Inſomuch, that had the Beſiegers but Patience to have ſtood ſtill, and lookt on, they might have diſcern'd them in a ready way to fall; if not by their Valour, at leaſt by their own Misfortunes, which muſt needs very much animate the *Romans*: for had they not been able to do it, the Sedition and Rage within the City muſt in courſe, by ſuch repeated Aſſaults, have deſtroyed it ſelf.

For want of Union there was not Strength enough to quiet the Mutinous within: and upon the ſame reaſon, they became too feeble and weak to oppoſe the Enemy without: And then the *Roman Eagle* ſoon began to ſeize, and clap its triumphant Wings over its ſo eaſie Prey. And, if we enquire into the Grounds, we ſhall find their Diviſions, among other great Iniquities, were at the bottom of theſe doleful Calamities: for when they had fill'd up the meaſures of their Fathers, 1 Theſ. 2. 16. *the wrath* of God, ſaith the Apoſtle, *came upon them to the uttermoſt*. For there was a Combination of Evils, and God ſuffered each by turns to do its part. Nay, Religion, which, of all other, in its own Nature tends moſt to compoſe Differences, had here by their miſtakes about it, clear contrary Effects, and did moſt enrage and foment them.

That

That which in it ſelf is deſcribed by St. *James*, to be *peaceable, gentle, eaſie to be intreated*, was the only thing about which they would not be pacified. That which was made up of all the healing Ingredients and intended to breath nothing but Love, and *Good Will among men*, Luk. 2. 14. became here the Reverſe to all this, and prov'd the *main Cauſe* of their Civil Wars and Contentions. Being as much divided in their Opinions, about the manner of their *Worſhip*, as the Philoſophers, of old, about their *Summum Bonum*, their *Chiefeſt Good*; and thereby minc'd into as many Petty Factions, almoſt, as there were Ceremonies in their Law. For here you might ſee an *Eſſene* ſo preciſe, as would not offer up Sacrifice in the *Temple*, for fear of a defilement; there a vain-glorious *Phariſee*, boaſting his ſpiritual Perfections in his very Prayers; and yonder a prophane *Sadducee*, denying both Spirits and Reſurrection, thoſe chief Foundations of all Religion; an effectual contrivance of Satan to diſtract the unſtable minds of Men; and each contending which ſhould prevail, at laſt this difference in Judgment roſe to high diſcontents; and the want of mutual Quiet, by degrees, was hatch'd into a publick Diſorder: ſo theſe Heart-burnings, which at firſt, like a few ſmall Sparks, ſcatter'd in ſeveral places, at length uniting, were blown up into an outragious Flame; and came from Arguments to Swords, and from private

private Quarrels into open Tumults. Their Diviſion brought them into ſuch a *Dilemma*, as they could turn no way with ſafety; to ſuch a ſad choice, either to be cut off by an Enemy without; or, what is more grievous and unnatural, to be ſhut up with no leſs mortal Enmities within; *for there was no peace in Iſrael.* And if the diſ-ingag'd ſtruck in with any of thoſe ſtrong contending Parties, they were like to fall a Sacrifice to their own Heats; if they continued Neuters, to be a Booty to one, or both, that were ſo hotly engag'd: If they endeavoured to ſecure themſelves by flight, they were in danger, as *Joſephus* informs, to be deſtroyed, under the pretence of Deſerters and Betrayers of their Liberty. For our Saviour gives this teſtimony of them, *That they hated and accuſed one another.* Nay, thoſe means that they were moſt confident in, did in effect ſtrike in to deceive them; even their falſe Prophets, (who had ſo far gain'd upon their Faith, and on whom they relyed) miſ-led them to their Ruine. For, by their Advice, ſome followed *Simon* with his Army in the Wilderneſs, as the Perſon (whom they were made to believe) ſhou'd work their deliverance. Some reſorted to the City, as the beſt fortified place; others were directed to *John* and his Faction, that was called the *Zealous*, that kept within the *Temple*, being aſſur'd, that they only who fled thither ſhould eſcape; in hopes of which,

which, they were hereby kept back from the only Remedy, a ſeaſonable Flight, by which the true Chriſtians did eſcape, at the removing of the Siege by *Gallus:* ſo that nothing could more aſcertain their deſtruction, than that very way by which they only thought to avoid it. For they ſtaying behind in *Judæa*, and not flying, as our Saviour counſelled his Diſciples, in a month after were ſhut up by a freſh Siege, and deſtroyed by *Titus*. Thus when the ſins of a Nation provoke God, to give them up to their own Counſels, He infatuates them, and makes every ſtep they take for their Safety, to be an occaſion of their Fall; and, themſelves unthinking of it, in a ſenſe to become their own *Executioners*.

The Summ of what I have ſaid, is, That their Sins and Diviſions made way for all this, and had a greater ſhare in bringing this Calamity upon them, than the *Roman* Army; and what was yet an addition to all, they never could out-live theſe their Misfortunes: but, as if a Spirit of Strife haunted them in every Change of Condition, they were not a-whit more reconciled, when their City was taken, and under their *New Maſters*. For how then were they divided about the Lawfulneſs of Subjection? ſome were content to be Tributaries others, deny'd it as an unjuſt Demand; pleading their Privilege of being *Abraham*'s Children, and never in bondage to any: *John* 18. and

ſo

ſo choſe to periſh by an obſtinate Reſiſtance, rather than pay Allegiance to an *Heathen Emperor*. Hence it was, that we read of the *Sect* of *Judas* of *Galilee*, *whoſe blood* was poured out, and by *Pilate mingled with their ſacrifices*, Luk. 13. 1. from which we ſee what miſerable effects, the Envy of the *Leaders* of *Three Sects* brought upon the Jews; no leſs than an equal number of *Calamities*, an irreparable *Deſtruction* on their *City*, *Temple*, and *Religion*. This was the ſad Iſſue of their Jarrs and Diſſentions, and at the ſame time an Apology for *Divine Juſtice*; that they had none to charge for their Sufferings, but themſelves. I wiſh that *Paleſtine* had been the only place that afforded inſtances of this kind; but too viſible are the effects that attend this Sin, both in *Sacred* and *Prophane* Story. I need mention but one; What an Overflowing of Blood did a *Faction* produce in *Africa*; when *Donatus* the Ring-leader, and his Followers, as *Diotrephes*, whom the Apoſtle mentions, 3 *Joh.* 9. for the *preeminence* of a Party, brought no leſs than utter Ruine upon that *Church*, and *Government*. *Opt. & Mil.*

Thus when the diſagreement of thoſe in *Jeruſalem* ran ſo high, and the ſeditious ſo numerous; the *oppoſite Followers*, both of *Simon*, and *John*, grew ſo over-heated and fiery, that the *Jewiſh Hiſtorian* remarks, That there was more *Rancour* and *inveterate Malice* againſt each other, whom their Reli-

gion ſhould have made Friends, than the *Heathen Armies* that were their open and profeſs'd Enemies. 'Tis a ſore Judgment, when God ſuffers a People to become their own Oppoſers, and prepare methods for their own Ruine; and moſt commonly ſuch are the ſad Effects, and *Remains of contending Parties*. Thus have we done with the *firſt* part, relating to the Time and Signs of the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*; and ſo proceed to,

2. The *ſecond*, *Of the End of the World*; which, in reſpect to God, as to its certainty, is already come, to *whom a thouſand years are but as one day*, and that by way of Condeſcenſion, *for they are as nothing*; it being true, not only in Philoſophy, That he is at all places preſent; but at all times too, for ſo we have it in our *Doxology*, *As it was in the beginning, is now*, &c. But in reſpect to Man, we can only ſay, *Behold, the hour is coming*. So I ſhall not, with ſome forward Conjecturers, venture to gueſs at the time, or determine its period, theſe are too nice as well as dangerous Enquiries; here the *Angels vail their faces*, and dare not pry ſo far into the deep things of God; much leſs is it for us to know the times and ſeaſons, being a Secret which God alone hath reſerv'd for himſelf.

So all that I ſhall ſay, is, in the words of St. *John* the Baptiſt, *Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand*; and, for ought we know, ſo near, that, ſhould

ſhould we look back to our paſt Actions, we would wiſh to put that *day and hour further from us:* But if we are curious with the Diſciples, to be informed when this ſhall come to paſs, and what ſhall be the *ſign*, I will go with you as far as I may, and with a ſafe curioſity ſearch into futurity. There are ſome dark hints, by the expreſſion of the *latter days*, *and the end of the world*, which ſeem to look that way. So far then as the Scripture hath given us light; the Signs of it are ſet down in the words following my Text.

(1.) *There ſhall many come in my name, and deceive many.*

(2.) *Ye ſhall hear of wars and rumours of wars. Nation ſhall riſe againſt Nation*, &c.

(3.) *There ſhall be Earthquakes in divers places.*

Now as far as they were Fore-runners of the *Jewiſh Deſolation*, I have ſpoken already; but if by the *End of the World* they reſpect a *Final Diſſolution*, then, *v.* 33. *Know that it is near*, even *at the doors*: ſo I ſhall examine them as they lie in order.

(1.) *There ſhall many come in my name, and deceive many.* This needs no proof in our Age, which verifies the words of *Jeremiah*, Jer. 5. 31. *The Prophets propheſie falſly, and my people love to have it ſo:* and the Apoſtle obſerves, That in the latter days, there ſhould be a ſtrange diſpoſition to *Errour*, having itching Ears, *not enduring ſound Doctrine*, *i. e.* ſo af-

fected with Novelties, and that true *Athenian* Humour, as to be ever in Love with ſome new thing.

Lipſius's words ſeem to be ſomewhat Prophetical of theſe times, *Nullum ſeculum religionis feracius, nec pietatis ſterilius*, For no Age ever made a greater noiſe, nor a leſs practice of Chriſtianity. Never more Phariſaical obſervance, and outward ſhows of Piety; and if without breach of Charity we may judge from what appears, never leſs *ſincere Love*, or *inward Devotion*; as if a bare ſound of the *Goſpel* was only deſign'd to go thro' the World, without leaving any Prints of vertuous Impreſſions behind it: little remains with ſome, but the mere empty Name of being *Chriſtians*.

(2.) As to *wars and rumours of wars*, &c. Tho' we have not a *Comet in the form of a Sword*, which for a year did hang over *Jeruſalem*; yet we have a real one, that for a far longer time has been unſheathed, and ſeems to have a *Commiſſion to go through all Lands*; there ſcarce being an habitable part of the *World*, but either is in, or preparing for Battel.

(3.) And as to the *third Sign*; We have had in the Revolution of one Year, *Earthquakes in divers places*, as to their extent perhaps not to be parallell'd; diſtant Countries trembling at once, tho' the great Deep interpos'd; as if there was no *Element* to go free: and as to their frequency, ſcarce ever known

known more numerous; and ſuch as we have not only heard of by Witneſſes from other *Iſlands*, but have had ſome monitory Warnings of them in our own. I ſhall not entertain you with any curious Speculations as to their natural Cauſes; all that I ſhall hence obſerve is, when God is angry, he will ſhew himſelf *wonderful in power*: and if nothing leſs will awake a ſtupid World, *ſhake the very foundations of the Earth*, as if He would puniſh the breach of his Law in as terrible a manner, as he firſt proclaimed it.

Seneca in his *ſixth Book of Natural Queſtions*, relates this to be the moſt dreadful Calamity incident to Mankind: his Reaſons are, *Hoſtem muro repellam*, &c. A Wall may keep out a powerful Army, Havens may ſhelter from a Tempeſt, and a Houſe from a Storm; we may run from Fire, and Vaults under ground are a remedy againſt Thunder and Lightning; In time of Peſtilence we may change our Dwellings: but this alone is unavoidable, which at once empties Cities, and overturns them, and if any thing yet can ſpeak it more diſmal, ſometimes ſcarce any remaining to give the ſad Relation; and 'tis a Mercy (as in the *caſe of a Meſſenger to Job*) *if one only eſcape to tell the matter*. An amazing Conſideration, that when a People walking upon the ground as on a moſt ſure foundation, and buſied about the Affairs of Life, that it ſhould open

its

its mouth, and all of a ſudden ſwallow them up into a *Land of Forgetfulneſs*. An aſtoniſhing ſight, to ſee whole Countries as, *in the beginning, rude and without form*: Gen. 1. 1, 2. all which, if not Fore-runners; yet I am ſure there can't be more lively Emblems and Repreſentations of a general *Diſſolution*. What ſhall they do then, who ſay, 2 Pet. 3. 4. *Where is the ſign of his coming? All things are as they were*, and to morrow ſhall be as to day. Alas, we know not what to morrow may bring forth! *They* as little thought of it then, as we do now, when the *Earth* gap'd and buried them in one common Grave. Nay, ſince the *Signs* may reſpect both, we may perhaps be rouz'd up out of our ſleep, by the ſound of the *Laſt Trump*. So, if theſe things that we have ſeen and heard at preſent, and what we believe to come, will not work us into an amendment, we are incurable.

Nothing now remains but to ſee how far theſe things are applicable to our ſelves. I ſhall only, *firſt*, obſerve to you, how unwilling God was to puniſh. How often was this repeated? *Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.* How long? Even forty years they were told, *the axe was laid to the root of the tree*; and when there was no remedy, yet even then, what pauſes Chriſt made, before he pronounced that dreadful ſentence; and at laſt in his approach near to the City, became a chief Mourner,

ner, and *wept over it himſelf*: nay, he ſhed tears, though in his Triumph, and intermingled a ſigh amidſt the loudeſt *Hoſanna's* and Acclamations in his Royal Progreſs; to think what an inevitable Ruine they had brought on themſelves and Nation; and that a choſen People, that had been the *Envy* of the World, ſhould become the greateſt *Scorn* of it. And theſe things, ſays the Apoſtle, were written for our inſtruction, to beware of thoſe Sins for which others have been ſo ſeverely ſcourged. We reſemble them (I fear) too much in *Impieties* of all kinds, in want of *Love* and *Duty* to God, and in *Affections* one to another: Our *Diviſions* are as many, and our Provocations as great, and if we continue to take the ſame courſe, what can we expect but a like iſſue? For though we have not Chriſt upon Earth to foretel by *Signs* in particular, as he did to *Jeruſalem*; yet we have his Holy Word as a ſtanding Prophecy, wherein we are told, That *unleſs we repent, we ſhall likewiſe periſh.* For in the order of Juſtice, as well as Nature, (where God in Mercy does not prevent) the like Cauſes do conſtantly produce the like Effects: Nay, as in the Bodies of ſick Perſons, the *Prognoſtick Signs* and *Tokens* of Death are frequently the ſame, when the *Diſeaſes* mainly differ; ſo theſe *three contingent Futures* as *preſaging Marks* and *Portents* may compleatly agree; for the various

ous Ruines of *Nations*, though compaſs'd by very different Cauſes and Springs of *Deſtruction*. Far be it from me, with the unwelcome Meſſage of *Micaiah*, to foretel not good, but evil to the place I live in; I do not pretend to any ſuch Prophetick Judgment; nor is there need of greater obſervation, than what evidently ariſes from things themſelves. For, if as our Saviour obſerves, *When ye ſee a cloud, ye ſtraightway ſay, There is a ſhower, and ſo it is*; why not then, if ye ſee the Earth once more over-ſpread with Wickedneſs, account it as a fore-runner of a Storm; For theſe are not *Dreams* of a diſtemper'd *Fancy*, but what the Scripture declares, and (if we look into God's ways, and ſee how he hath dealt with other People,) what the Event does verifie. *God will not ſuffer his ſpirit always to ſtrive with man*; and when Corruption is almoſt univerſal, and, 1 Joh. 5. 19. *The whole world lieth in wickedneſs*, it ſeems to me what the Prophet *Jeremiah* ſpeaks, *Jer.* 25. 35. as if God had once more a Controverſie with all Nations; for he has thrown them into ſuch circumſtances, as they can in no wiſe extricate or diſ-intangle themſelves; and ſuch an intereſt is interwoven and runs thro' the whole, which (as in a *Labyrinth*) no party knows how to get out of. But whatever may be the Events of a War abroad, let us not, by falling into *Diſcontents*, and *Parties*, ſacrifice our Peace at home; and then this

may

may be our Comfort under the worſt that can happen, That our Sins and private Diſſentions did not contribute to it; ſo that whatever the neceſſity of publick Affairs may oblige us to, yet 'twill be our ſatisfaction, if in our reſpective ſtations we have done all we can to prevent it. We have heard that *Diviſions* had the greateſt ſhare in *Jeruſalem*'s Fall; and *Hiſtorians* tell us, that in all times, they have been the occaſion of the greateſt Sufferings in our own; for *England* is fitly compared to an *Animal* of ſuch a Conſtitution, that unleſs it breeds its own Diſeaſe, nothing can deſtroy it. And, when there are ſuch *ill Symptoms*, we ſhould, one would think, grow ſick of our Feuds, and our unprofitable Contentions: moſt certainly every ones private intereſt is beſt ſecured in a publick Good; and whenever any ſide, like *Sampſon*, glorys to ſhew their ſtrength in pulling down an *Eſtabliſhment*; They may perchance meet with the like Fate *he* had, to bury themſelves in the ſame Ruines that they make. Let not Zeal to a *Party* ſo blind our Affections, as to purchaſe the Jews *Motto*, *Thy Ruine is from thy ſelf*: though we are ſo unhappy to have numerous Opinions, let us, as far as may be, avoid the ill effects of them. Let not any who pretend to agree in common Chriſtianity, rend that ſeamleſs Coat without Cauſe, and without End, in contending about its Fringes. For if *it be a good thing for Brethren to dwell together in*

Unity, it must be of very ill Consequence to be at variance: for a Man may as well hope to see a Body in a Fever, and every Member out of Joynt, and feel no pain; as a City or Kingdom dis-united by Grudgings and Animosities, to be easie, or under the Condition of a lasting Happiness. If Dangers abroad, and at home a fiery Zeal, and Ambition; if *familiar Friends ready to lift up their heels* against one another, be ill Fore-runners; *the present State* of things seem to be in a very strange *Conjunction*; and if we may judge from *Story*, 'tis an ill Presage to a People, where so unhappy a Spirit prevails.

The *Politick Body* may make this wise Observation from the *Natural*, compos'd of *four Elements* of the most contrary *Qualities*, and disagreeing *Natures*; that while their Operations tend to the same end, and that there is kept a due Temper, the Whole is preserved: But when any one Humour predominates, it is made thereby uncapable of a *regular Discharge* of its *Office*. We may once more, to our shame, be sent to the *Bee* and *Ant*, Emblems of *Prudence* as well as *Diligence*, where all are at work together for a *Common Stock*; and if I may so say, do fortifie and intrench themselves against the *Injuries* of *Seasons*. And we must be a very dull and unthinking People, if we do not look upon our selves as *Sharers* in a publick Loss: for such strokes affect

affect ſo many ways, that in one ſenſe or other, every one muſt feel it. I know when any thing of this kind falls out, we are forward to make our *Conjectures* about it; to impute it to Miſmanagement, to want of Conduct, or Stores of Proviſion, to ſome unlucky Chance, or what not: But 'tis no ſuch *Riddle* or *Myſtery* to find out the Cauſe, it is too viſible; but we are apt to lay it any where but where we ought, namely, upon our Sins. We forget God is concern'd in over-ruling *Humane Affairs*, and may interpoſe to fruſtrate the Wiſeſt Counſels. Next under God, is what *Ageſilaus* ſaid of *Sparta*; *Unanimity* is the ſtrongeſt Wall to a City; this makes faſt the Bars of its Gates; this bends the Bow, puts Courage into the Soldier, and Fear into the Enemy. The *Roman Hiſtorian* tells us, 'Twas not the *Sword* but *Union* that made the Monarchs of *Greece* and *Rome*, *Maſters of the World*: Diſcord hinders the due Execution of the beſt Advices; and *Greg. Nazian.* compares a Government to a Ship at Sea, and few conſider how many times it exceeds the Skill of the *moſt experienced Pilot* to ſteer it in a Tempeſt. Let not the Opinion of being on *this or that Side* flatter us into *Security*; for be the *Cauſe* what it will, yet our Sins may with-hold *good things* from us: nor may we depend on our being of a more pure *Religion*, *for judgment begun at the houſe of God*, and the very time of the *Paſſover*

was the beginning of this *Jewish Slaughter*; by which we may see, that God does not respect the Place where Christianity is profess'd, but where it is practis'd. What though we may have greater degrees and measures of Knowledge, yet if we live not suitable thereto, 'twill rise up in judgment against us. 'Tis true, God will not suffer Truth to fail, yet he has no where promised to confine it to any one sort of People, of which my Text is a great instance; for never any before, or since had so much to presume upon in this kind as *Jerusalem* had; of whom it was said, *Here will I dwell for ever:* and (if God exempted not the place where his *Temple* was built, and his *Honour* dwelt) *If he spared not the Natural Branches, What shall become of them that obey not the Gospel of Christ?* Neither may we hope to fare better, upon a belief, that other Nations are worse; for the *Romans*, then *Heathen*, and profess'd Enemies to *Christianity*, who had join'd with them in crucifying the *Lord of Life*, were here made the Instruments of their *Destruction*; God sometimes makes wicked Princes, as the *Assyrian* and *Babylonian*, to be the *Rod of his Wrath*, even against his own People. But the Jews could not believe any thing of all this; they could not imagine that God would suffer a People in *Covenant*, and endear'd to him by so many Favours, to fall after so terrible a manner; nay, to the very last 'twas the least they feared,

ed, and nothing could convince them, *That their houſes ſhould be left unto them deſolate*, till they beheld them before their eyes lie buried in their duſt: Herein was their deluſion, they accounted upon the *Priviledges*, but took no notice of their *Diſobedience* that cancell'd them; reck'ned much on *God's Promiſe* to them, but conſidered not the *Conditions* they had broke, and to what degrees their *Sins* had provoked him: we cannot be more inapprehenſive of danger than they were, when at the very brink of Ruine, whom no Prediction could perſwade, that they were ſo nigh a *final Deſtruction*, till the Event had proved it. If ſo, let us, what they too long neglected, *know the things that belong unto our peace*; our *Lot is fallen in a fair ground*: ſo if we have any Love or Compaſſion for our ſelves or Relations; if *for our Brethren and Companions ſake, we wiſh proſperity*; if pity to ſuch a glorious City, ſo populous for its Inhabitants, ſo regular for its Buildings, has any influence upon us, as the *Pſalmiſt* ſaith, *Let us ſeek to do her good*. For of *This* it may be ſaid as of *Jeruſalem* of old, by way of Admiration, *Go round about her, mark well her Bulwarks, her ſtrong Towers and beautiful Temples; View her Royal Thrones, the City of the great King, where God is well known in her Palaces*; to the Diſtreſſed both a Sanctuary, and a *City of Refuge*. A true Parallel with *Sion*, *It* being not only the *Beauty*, but partaking of the *Advantages* of the

the *whole Earth*; ſo ſituated, that all things both of Pleaſure and Profit, as into *Canaan*, come flowing into it; ſince what is wanting from abroad, God *hath made us a way* for *in the ſea*, and *a path in the mighty waters*; and ſuch a one which ſtands both as a Wall againſt the Enemy, and a Security to our ſelves. Time would fail me to recount how ſignal it is for its Deliverances, that when Deſolations are all round about us, we *have* no *complaining in our ſtreets*; when violent Storms are abroad, to be in a quiet Condition at home; that amongſt ſo many Diviſions and Strugglings of *Parties*, *that Peace ſhould ſtill be within her walls*: in an Age ſo full of ill nature, it is a Mercy that (as by the oppoſition of contrary waves) 'ere this we are not daſhed in pieces; and amidſt ſuch a contradiction of Spirits, (when as the Apoſtle ſaith, we *bite and devour one another*) it is next to a Miracle that we are *not conſumed one of another*, Gal. 5. 15. *Jeruſalem*'s Strength and Beauty laſted no longer than there was *Unity within it ſelf*, which was as neceſſary to the well-being of that Government, as Cement and Faſtenings to her Buildings; for a City, according to *Ariſtotle*, is φιλικὴ κοινωνία, a Community living under Regularity and Order, where every one mutually combines, and is unanimous for one general Good; without which it would not be a Civil Society, but a giddy Multitude. God grant, before it be too late,

that

that both one and other may hear with Patience thoſe Sins diſcovered, that are enemies to our peace, whether in Practice or Opinion; that HE would reduce the World to a happy ſtate of Union, and ſtop the iſſue of Blood, and make *Wars to ceaſe in all the World:* but this is a Bleſſing we cannot expect, till we are more juſt to God and our ſelves; till more ſincere in our Worſhip, and more hearty in our Repentance.

Having hitherto ſhewn what were the common Fore-runners of a People's Ruine, and what is the only way to prevent it in this *World*; it only remains, that I conſider 'em as in reſpect to the *Next*; of which if theſe are Signs, we have cauſe to fear, that the day is approaching. But admit there will be no Fore-runners thereof, no *Comet*, as over *Jeruſalem*, to foretel, no Flaſh of Lightning to warn us of that *terrible Clap, in which the Heavens ſhall paſs away with a mighty noiſe*; admit *Nature* will have no Pangs or Throws but her laſt, and no fore-*Convulſions* of *HER* departing, to awaken us: Then this calls upon us ſo much the more, to be always ready. The *Old World* thought as little on the End of that, as we can of this, as appears by their *eating and drinking*, their *marrying and giving in marriage*, all promiſing Signs of a Continuance. Oh, the ſtupidity of Men! *Noah* was an hundred and twenty years preaching, and an hun-

dred

dred building the *Ark*, and they both heard and saw the design thereof, but would not believe it: And the *Ark* being a *Type* of the *Christian Church*, if we should not take some notice thereof, 'twould shew how careless the generality of this Age is, who are [illegible] we know, the People *upon whom the ends of the world are come*: for the Destruction of the *second*, may be as surprizing as the *first*, nay more; for they had certain fore-warnings, but our time may be, when we think not of it; *for the Son of Man is said to come as lightning out of the East, which shineth unto the West*, v. 27. which we know, insensibly darts thro' the Air in the twinkling of an eye, quicker than sight it self. But how distant soever the *general Judgment* may be, since the *end* of our lives is not far of, which is to us as the *End of the World*, *What manner of persons ought we to be?* It is recorded in the following Chapter for Wisdom in the *five Virgins*, that as soon as there was a Cry made, *Behold, the Bridegroom cometh* (tho' at midnight) *they arose and trimm'd their lamps, and went out to meet him*: and every sign we see or hear, should be as a voice, to tell us, the *day is approaching*: let us not then, like the *foolish ones*, *come too late*, *and the door be shut*, but have our *lights* still *burning*, that we may be ready while time is, *to enter into the Joy of our Master*.

FINIS.